

Preparing our hearts?

By Dean Lusk, Worship Pastor at Wall Highway Baptist Church in Madison, AL.

I sometimes consider the idea that solos and corporately-sung music of worship and praise in a meeting of Christ-followers have the primary function of **preparing our hearts to hear the Word**. I've heard this stated and repeated moderately often over the years as I've led music in Church meetings.

I'm not sure I find any Biblical support for it.

Surely this isn't a bad idea, though, is it? I mean, anything that focuses us on Christ is automatically good (or has seriously good elements). And Biblically, we read about David playing his harp for Saul, and as a result evil spirits stopped persecuting Saul. Remember, however, that David played music for a specific purpose -- to calm Saul down. It was not corporate worship time.

But doesn't this view of corporate singing take something intended for God and transform it into a self-serving vehicle? Rather than being able to say, "Here we are, Lord. We're not here for any benefit to us, but for Yours alone," **we give ourselves a platform by which to judge whether or not that day's music at an acceptable level.** Acceptable to whom? Well, *us/me*, of course! It's got to prepare *my* heart. If the scheduled order of service gets us to the sermon time and I'm not ready to hear the Word, then something was obviously amiss during the "worship set." **This perspective transforms potential corporate worship into a highly individualized feeling.**

To be sure, if the drums or bass or guitar are punishingly loud, it's probably going to squelch any potential the music has for a beneficial purpose. Similarly, if we always sing only songs that are generic and could be sung to a person of the opposite sex and still "work" (which is how modern Christian music is often unfairly painted with a broad brush), we're missing the point, as well.

Worshipping God absolutely prepares us to hear from the Lord -- I will not argue against that -- and He often speaks to us in the middle of our expressions of worship. I would argue that **this is a side benefit to God's people rather than something that should be a goal.**

What's your reason(s) for participating in singing with the Church?